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ANTI-SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA

EXTRACTS FROM

Thos. Jefferson, Gen. Washington and oth

RELATIVE TO THE

“BLIGHTING CURSE OF SLAVERY.”

Debates on the “Nat Turner Insurrecti
Queries by William Crane, &c.

27-5



BALTIMORE:

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1865.

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ANTI-SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA.

From JEFFERSON'S "NOTES ON VIRGINIA," written 1781.
Query xviii :

The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unrelenting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it, for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave, he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive, either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally, it is not sufficient. The parent storms; the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose tongue to the worst of his passions, and, thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and his morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other. For, if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live

and labor for another—in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute, as far as depends on his individual endeavors, to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him. With the morals of a people, their industry also is destroyed; for, in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true that, of the proprietors of slaves, a very small proportion, indeed, are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God; that they are not to be violated but with His wrath? *Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever.* That, considering numbers, nature and natural means, only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events. That it may become probable *by supernatural interference!* *The Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest.*

But it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history, natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating. That of the slave, rising from the dust, his condition mollifying—the way, I hope, preparing, under the auspices of heaven, *for a total emancipation*; and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be *with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.*

Extract from THOMAS JEFFERSON to EDWARD COLES, August, 1814:

“The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It will come, and whether brought on by the gener-

ous energy of our own minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, excited and conducted by the power of our present enemy, [Great Britain,] if once stationed permanently within our country and offering asylum and arms to the oppressed, [negro,] is a leaf in our history *not yet turned over.*"

Extract from the Will of General WASHINGTON, July, 1799, evincing a thorough repugnance to the whole system of slavery :

"*Item.* Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire, that all the slaves which I hold *in my own right*, shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life, would, though earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties, on account of their intermixture by marriages, with the dower Negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences to the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same proprietor ; it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the dower Negroes are held, to manumit them. And whereas, among those who will receive freedom according to this devise, there may be some who, from old age or bodily infirmities, and others who, on account of their infancy, will be unable to support themselves, it is my will and desire, that all who come under the first and second description, shall be comfortably clothed and fed by my heirs while they live ; and that such of the latter description as have no parents living, or, if living, are unable or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty-five years ; and in cases where no record can be produced, whereby their ages can be ascertained, the judgment of the court, upon its own view of the subject, shall be adequate and final. The Negroes thus bound, are, by their masters or mistresses to be taught to read and write, and be brought up to some useful occupa-

tion, agreeably to the laws of the commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of orphan and other poor children. And I do hereby expressly forbid the sale or transportation out of the said commonwealth, of any slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence whatsoever. And I do moreover most pointedly and most solemnly enjoin it upon my executors hereafter named, or the survivors of them, to see that *this* clause respecting slaves, and every part thereof, be religiously fulfilled at the epoch at which it is directed to take place, without evasion, neglect, or delay, after the crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm ; seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established for their support as long as they are subjects requiring it, not trusting to the uncertain provision made by individuals."

NAT TURNER MASSACRE.

The Nat Turner massacre in Southampton county, Va., commenced August 20th, 1831, at midnight, and lasted but one day. It appears to have been the only real Negro insurrection that has ever occurred, during nearly two and a-half centuries of slavery in this country—and this was a local occurrence, extending over a space of probably not more than fifteen or twenty square miles. But while our country has never witnessed any enlarged plans of servile insurrection, proving that the frightful apprehensions so often indulged, that one race must some day exterminate the other, have had little or no foundation, yet this was a most horribly fiendish affair. Ten men, fourteen women, and thirty-one children, were indiscriminately murdered. Turner made a full confession to Thomas R. Gray, published in Baltimore the same year. He says he had learned to read and write, but had manifestly no advantages of wisdom from books. He seems to have been absorbed entirely in fanatical impressions, in signs, dreams, &c., and

particularly that God had destined him to the work in which he engaged. He had no matured plans, and no coadjutors beyond about half a dozen men in his immediate vicinity with a supply of whiskey, until they commenced their work, when perhaps thirty or forty others joined them. Only fifteen individuals, including Nat himself, were tried and executed, though others were transported out of the State. A terrible excitement over the whole of the Slave States was of course the immediate consequence, and, at the next meeting of the Virginia Legislature, the great questions of Negro slavery, and of liberty and slavery generally, were the all-absorbing topics of discussion.

A committee appointed on memorials praying for some law for a gradual abolition of slavery, reported a resolution, that it was *inexpedient* to legislate at all on the subject; and a motion to amend by inserting *expedient* in the place of *inexpedient*, was the general point of the debate. The whole subject was most eloquently discussed in all of its aspects and interests, its present and prospective evils, but a large majority coincided with the report of the committee. The same Legislature, however, enacted those wicked laws, prohibiting under severe penalties all preaching by colored men, and all schools for teaching colored people.

The speeches in this debate were published in the Richmond Enquirer, and were many of them afterwards published in pamphlet form by the friends of the negro and scattered over the State, but unhappily the authors were all charged with abolitionism, and their political prospects were well nigh prostrated forever.

A few very brief extracts from some of these speeches are subjoined :

VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE, JANUARY, 1832.

Mr. P. A. BOLLING, of Buckingham, said :

“ He dared repeat that slavery was a *blighting, withering curse*, that robs Virginia of her wealth, honor and prosper-

ity, and he foreboded the day when civil discord shall shake this vast empire to its centre, when the black war-cloud shall lower and its thunderings be heard throughout the land."

And he closed his speech with these admirable words :

" Mr. Speaker, it is vain for gentlemen to deny the fact, the feelings of society are fast becoming adverse to slavery. The moral causes which produce that feeling are on the march, and will on *until the groans of slavery are heard no more in this else happy country.* Look over this world's wide page—see the rapid progress of liberal feelings—see the shackles falling from nations who have long writhed under the galling yoke of slavery. Liberty is going over the whole earth—hand in hand with christianity. The ancient temples of slavery, rendered venerable alone by their antiquity, are crumbling into dust. Ancient prejudices are flying before the light of truth—are dissipated by its rays, as the idle vapor by the bright sun. The noble sentiment of Burns :

" Come let us pray, that come it may
As come it will, for all that,
That man to man, o'er all the world,
May brother be, for all that"—

is rapidly spreading. The day-star of human liberty has risen above the dark horizon of slavery, and will continue its bright career, until it smiles alike on all men."

Mr. C. J. FAULKNER, of Berkeley, said :

" Sir, I am gratified that no gentleman has yet risen in this Hall, the advocate of slavery. * * * * Let me compare the condition of the slaveholding portion of this commonwealth, barren, desolate, and scarred, as it were, by the avenging hand of heaven, with the descriptions which we have of this same country, from those who first broke its virgin soil. To what is this change ascribable? Alone to the withering, blasting effects of slavery. If this does not

satisfy him, let me request him to extend his travels to the Northern States of this Union, and beg him to contrast the happiness and contentment which prevails throughout that country, the busy and cheerful sound of industry, the rapid and swelling growth of their population, their means and institutions of education, their skill and proficiency in the useful arts, their enterprise and public spirit, the monuments of their commercial and manufacturing industry, and above all their devoted attachment to the government from which they derive their protection, with the division, discontent, indolence, and poverty of the Southern country. To what, sir, is all this ascribable? 'Tis to that *vice* in the organization of society by which one-half of its inhabitants are arrayed in interest and feeling against the other half; to that unfortunate state of society in which free men regard labor as disgraceful, and slaves shrink from it as a burden tyrannically imposed upon them. *'To that condition of things in which half a million of your population can feel no sympathy with the society, in the prosperity of which, they are forbidden to participate, and no attachment to a government at whose hands they receive nothing but injustice.'* In the language of the wise, prophetic Jefferson, 'you must approach this subject, YOU MUST ADOPT SOME PLAN OF EMANCIPATION, OR WORSE WILL FOLLOW.' "

Mr. THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, grand-son of Thomas Jefferson, had no superior for patriotic eloquence during this most interesting debate. After showing that the Negro population in Eastern Virginia had increased 186 per cent. in the 40 years from 1790 to 1830, while the whites in the same region had increased but 51 per cent., he remarked :

"There is one circumstance to which we are to look as inevitable in the fullness of time—a *dissolution of this Union*. God grant it may not happen in our time or that of our children; but, sir, it must come sooner or later, and when it does come, border war follows it, as certain as the night fol-

lows the day. An enemy upon your frontier offering arms and asylum to this population, tampering with it in your bosom, when your citizens shall march to repel the invader, their families butchered and their homes desolated in the rear, the spear will fall from the warrior's grasp, his heart may be of steel, but it must quail. Suppose an invasion in part with *black troops*, speaking the same language, of the same nation, burning with enthusiasm for the liberation of their race; if they are not crushed the moment they put foot upon your soil, they roll forward, an hourly swelling mass; your energies are paralyzed, your power is gone; the morasses of the lowlands, the fastnesses of the mountains, cannot save your wives and children from destruction. Sir, we cannot war with these disadvantages; *peace, ignoble, abject peace; peace upon any conditions that an enemy may offer, must be accepted.* Are we, then, prepared to barter the liberty of our children for slaves for them. * * * Sir, it is a practice, and an increasing practice in parts of Virginia to *rear slaves for market.* How can an honorable mind, a patriot and a lover of his country, bear to see this ancient Dominion, rendered illustrious by the noble devotion and patriotism of her sons, in the cause of liberty, converted into one grand menagerie, where men are to be reared for market like oxen for the shambles. Is this better, is it not worse, than the *Slave Trade*, that trade which enlisted the labor of the *good and the wise of every creed and every clime to abolish it?*"

The excellent speeches of THOMAS MARSHALL, of Fauquier, son of Chief-Justice Marshall, JOHN A. CHANDLER, of Norfolk, HENRY BERRY, of Jefferson, and the late Gov. JAMES McDOWELL, of Rockbridge, were also reprinted and scattered. But all their efforts were fruitless,—cupidity and cotton reigned. The Demon of Slavery was then urging John C. Calhoun, and his coadjutors, forward in their diabolical nullification raid upon our Union and Government—but the

iron will of President Jackson, and the irresistible eloquence of Webster, Clay, and their fellow-compatriots, baffled them. Their insidious, wicked plottings, however, have been continued for nearly a third of a century, till now, slavery with all of its arrogant and inhuman appendages, under a just and overruling Providence, has blindly destroyed itself, and prostrated its abettors in a most sanguinary rebellion against the best government in the world.

Baltimore, July, 1865.

Queries by William Crane, Written in Richmond in 1832.*

“1. In the advancing state of religion and civil liberty in the world, can the colored population of our country continue in its present degraded condition?

“2. With a rapidly increasing population of two and a half millions [1862 over four millions] of colored people, four-fifths of whom are held in abject slavery, and all deprived, through the pride, and prejudice, and oppression of white men, of their inalienable rights, what ought the christian and the philanthropist to do, to ameliorate their condition?

“3. If, during the last forty years, two hundred and sixty thousand colored people have been drained off from lower Virginia, to the States farther south and west, and during the same period in this region, the increase of colored people has amounted to over one hundred and eighty-six per cent., while the white people have increased but fifty-one per cent., what must be expected for another forty years, when the States South and West, may be in a great measure, if not entirely, closed against the admission of slaves from this region?

*First published in the *Watchman and Reflector*, Boston, September 25, 1862.

“4. While the law of our country, as well as the moral feeling of the whole civilized world, has classed the crime of the slave-trader on the coast of Africa with that of the pirate and the murderer, can the people of this country calmly continue to witness their fellow beings advertised and sold at auction, often without any regard to family ties, and carried in droves from State to State by the domestic slave-trader, without feeling a just horror at the traffic, and without determining that this traffic shall be discontinued?

“5. Notwithstanding the benevolent efforts of the American Colonization Society have shown that these people are capable of prosperously governing themselves, when colonized on the coast of Africa, and have moreover shown that these colonies are the only means of effectually annihilating the slave trade, of spreading the light of civilization and religion throughout Africa, as well as of immediately raising the African character to an equality with the rest of mankind, is it not still vain to suppose that the whole of our colored population can ever be sent away?

“6. Is it possible, indeed, to find a habitable location and the means of transporting and subsisting for at least twelve months, even the present annual increase—say seventy thousand of them—at a cost of not less than fifty dollars each, leaving the two and a-half millions still among us? And could a society so numerous, so ignorant, and so hastily thrown together, possibly govern itself?

“7. If the American Colonization Society, with all its laudable and vigorous efforts, has located and settled only three thousand colored people in the space of thirteen years, while during the same period the natural increase of these people in this country has amounted to about seven hundred thousand, and if many of the friends of the Colonization Society, are deserting it, and a powerful opposition is rising against it in the Northern States, while at the same time the free colored people are positively refusing to go—what possible ground of hope can there be that *all* will

ever be sent away? And does not this apparent impossibility furnish the abolitionist an unanswerable argument against the colonizationist who urges it?

“8. Does not experience prove that colored people almost universally turn away with disgust from the thought of their being all sent, *en masse*, from the land of their birth and the graves of their ancestors—to Africa, of which country they know nothing, except what white people tell them? And are they not generally disposed to regard colonization as an unfeeling, unjust, oppressive scheme towards them, and thus become ready listeners to abolitionism?

“9. Can the free colored man be deprived of the property he may have inherited from his father, or derived from his own labor, and he be taken away? Or by what process can the vast number of trusty, affectionate family servants ever be separated from the families in which they have been raised? Would not all the worst horrors of a civil war be the immediate result of an attempt violently to separate them?

“10. Intermingled through all our families, as the colored people are, connected with white people, in thousands of instances, not only by ties of friendship but of blood, and these ties not at all diminishing—will not insurmountable difficulties continually arise in attempting to remove them all?

“11. If the white and the colored people of this country were all of them originally emigrants to it, and if, since 1808, no colored people have been admitted here, while the white people have come and gone again, at their pleasure, and are now, a large proportion of them, emigrants from the Northern States and from Europe, and if in fact the colored people are the workers of the soil on which they were born and on which their fathers have died, and have little or no knowledge of any other part of the world, can it be just to send them forcibly away, or to deny them the rights of natives, the rights, indeed, of native citizens?

"12. Is it not a fact that the working population of every country, with the vigorous constitutions derived from their working habits, increase much faster than those in affluent circumstances, and in time gradually, but necessarily, become superior in numbers to them?

"13. If the ancestors of our colored people were stolen from Africa, and, through the avarice and oppression of white men, have been for ages on our soil, will it not be doubling that oppression, and approving the deeds of our ancestors, to send them all back to Africa, when they are unwilling to go?

"14. Is it just to say to the black man, This is not your country, you must return to Africa, when the Indian can so justly retort upon us, This is not your country—you ought in justice to return to Europe, and restore us the soil which you have taken from us?

"15. If a nation of colored people shall rise and spread itself on the Western coast of Africa, by emigration from this country, will the present wild, uncultivated soil there admit of a much faster growth in population than some of our Western States have witnessed? And have not our Northern and Middle States continued to increase, notwithstanding the immense drains of emigrants from them?

"16. Is any great good to be derived from forcibly and oppressively removing all the colored people away, (admitting it were possible to do so,) other than to gratify the pride and haughtiness of the white man, in his supposed superiority over the colored—could they not in time be instructed, and made intelligent and useful in this country, and would there not be room enough for all of us, if this pride and haughtiness were laid aside?

"17. Does history furnish any example for the entire removal of such a population? Did the exodus of the Israelites, or the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, furnish anything like a parallel? Was not one of these cases effected by the miraculous power of the Almighty, and the

other only in part, and by an unmerciful sword? And did not the most inveterate religious *caste* in both instances, prevent anything like such a union as our country furnishes? And in the immense range and changes among ancient and modern empires, are these the only examples that can be furnished?

“18. If the white man is disposed to make reparation for what the poor African has suffered at his hands, can he possibly do it by forcibly driving him from the soil on which his fathers lived and died, and to which he has become as much naturalized as the white man himself? And will it not be far more christian-like now to allow the colored man to remain where he is, if he prefers it, and to repair the wrongs which he and his fathers have suffered, by endeavoring to instruct, enlighten and christianize him?

“19. If we endeavor to christianize the heathen in Africa, and feel it our duty to do so, will it not be an easier task to christianize their more enlightened descendants in this country? And is it not grossly inconsistent to pray and labor that the native African may be enlightened and saved, while the colored people of our own country are in a great measure neglected?

“20. While the polished nations of Europe, with the most of the new States and republics of our own continent have given every political and social privilege to the black man, and while the English government has decided to allow full liberty to all slaves within her American colonial dominions—can the *boasted freest people on earth* continue to deny them to so large a part of their population?

“21. Was there anciently, in Jerusalem or Rome, any prejudice against the color of the African skin? Were not the wife of Moses, the most cherished Egyptian wife of Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, and the Ethiopian eunuch in *Palestine*, and the Carthaginian, Mauritanian and Numidian Princes in *Rome*, received as favorably as those from any other part of the world? Or was the color of their skin any disparagement to them?

“22. Did this prejudice ever exist previous to the sixteenth century? Did it not take its rise among the depraved men-stealers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? And is it not now confined almost entirely to these United States?

“23. While the colors, black, and brown, and yellow are all comely enough when we ourselves choose them, in our apparel or any part of our equipage, and while the Creator has fastened these colors on a part of our race in such a manner that we can neither make nor remove them, and while “God is no respecter of persons, but has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of all the earth,” is it not grossly wicked in us to indulge so much prejudice against the colored skin of our fellow beings as from that circumstance alone to deprive them of equal civil rights with ourselves?

“24. If the same political rights and privileges which the white man possesses were allowed to the colored man, would this necessarily give the colored man any claim to the daughter of the white man in marriage? Are not political rights, and social or family rights, distinct things? Would they not continue separate, just as the respectable and the profligate, the poor and the rich, the learned and the illiterate now do? And if marriage were legalized, would connections of this kind bear any proportion to the now existing wide-spread criminal cohabitation between white men and colored women throughout the Southern States?

“25. Are not colored women in all the Slave States universally suspected to be of loose character, and all motive to retain their virtue thus destroyed? Is not this the cause of an unknown amount of debauchery among white men, and does not the large natural increase of the colored over the white arise in a great measure from the mulatto product of this illicit intercourse?

“26. Does not an amalgamation of white and colored people, or a union of the two classes, already exist to so

great an extent that they can never be separated? Can the strong ties of friendship and of blood, mingled and interwoven for ages through five or six millions of people, ever be sundered? And are not these ties every day silently and secretly increasing, far beyond the utmost power of human prevention or control?

“27. Can the white man be justified in denying inalienable rights to the colored man, because possibly matrimonial connections between the white and the colored race may in future take place? Have we not now an immense number of mulattos among us, and the number constantly increasing? And may it not be questioned whether the increase would be greater if marriage were legalized?

“28. Is it not denying the white man an inalienable right, legally to deprive him of the object of his choice, of whatever color that choice may be?

“29. Does not a parent now, in determining who shall receive the hand of his daughter, affectionately and earnestly say to her, “Do not marry a drunkard or a debauchee, and insure yourself a life of misery?” And if the law allowed her to marry a colored man, in the present state of society, would he not as earnestly and affectionately add, “Do not marry a black man, and thereby throw yourself out of the society with which you have always associated?”

“30. Will a just God sustain nine or ten millions [in 1832] of the self-styled *most free, most virtuous and most enlightened*, out of the eight or ten hundred millions of our race, in the indulgence of an unwarrantable prejudice against the colored skin of our depressed neighbors? (whom He commands us to love as ourselves.) And is there not awful reason to fear that, in accordance with his dealings with ancient nations, He will rather *repay on the heads of white men the woes they have so abundantly inflicted on the *Indian*

*Witness the Seminole war in Florida, and especially the cruel expulsion of the Cherokees from upper Georgia; and witness now (July, 1865,) the desolation at Atlanta and so many other places.

tribes of our country on the one hand, and on the *poor African slave* on the other?

“31. If the barbarities of the feudal systems in England and other European countries—in the inevitable employment by the barons of slaves as well as free men, in their perpetual intestine wars—resulted ultimately in a perfect political equality of all the races, and caused the annihilation of slavery there, can no peaceable means be invented, in the unparalleled light of the nineteenth century, to annihilate slavery in our country, with all its concomitant evils? Or can our apprehensions be suppressed that possibly the same kind of intestine civil discord and barbarity may be left to accomplish it?

“32. Can the millennial day arrive, and the Golden Rule of our Saviour,—“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,”—be fully and universally practised, while this prejudice against the color of our fellow-men continues?

“33. As the millennium approaches, and the light of truth through the influence of Bibles, of Sunday Schools, of missions and tracts, &c., &c., becomes effectual on the hearts of men, will not the *free, Republican, Christian white man feel*, that in denying the intelligent colored man equal civil rights with himself, *simply* because his skin is not white, he is robbing the colored man of that which he considers far dearer than any earthly possessions? And will not the white man determine that he will not be a robber?

“34. Can it be denied that many of the concomitants of slavery in our country are decidedly criminal?—the non-recognition of the marriage rite; the legally selling and scattering, at auction or otherwise, husbands and wives, parents and children, just as the cupidity or lust of a heartless owner or buyer may lead them; the internal traffic in human beings, dragging them in chains from State to State, placing them thus on a perfect level with brutes, with all of its inevitable attendant concubinage and debauchery; the legal

enactments, prohibiting all instruction of both slaves and free colored people, even to read the Bible, as well as the corporeal, cruel punishment of colored men for trying to preach the Gospel? Will not a just God 'visit for these things?' Can He withhold His judgments from them?

"35. Can the slavery of the Old Testament be properly regarded in any other light than as one of the great evils of the fall of man, which, with polygamy and many other evils in that dark age, God overlooked or 'winked at?' And should we not be guided on these subjects entirely by the superior light of the Golden Rule of the New Testament?

"36. Does the New Testament anywhere directly, unequivocally approbate slavery, except as obedience to earthly governments required it? Do not its teachings, and its forms of christian communion, entirely nullify or take from this civil institution all of its evil concomitants?"

The foregoing queries were originally written out in Richmond, while I resided there, in 1832, with the exception of a very few slight additions and changes of phraseology. I had for nearly twenty years previously been on quite intimate terms with the most respectable, intelligent part of the religious colored people in Richmond, especially in connection with their sending missionaries to Africa. I had earnestly participated in the great scheme of African colonization from its origin, and, along with the friends of that scheme generally, had entertained the *hope*, if not the *belief*, that our colored population might in time be *all* separated from the whites, and removed to Africa. But I became indubitably convinced that this must be utterly, hopelessly impracticable; that the increasing millions of the African race were quite as immovably fixed to the soil of our Southern States, as the whites themselves. I found very few individuals to sympathize with me in my conclusions. Some were quite willing to call me an abolitionist of the Northern stamp, and for this reason these

thoughts were written out in a hypothetical or interrogatory form, as the most unobjectionable mode of giving them. I find, however, after the lapse of thirty years, that, however singular any of these views may be, I am only more and more confirmed in them. One of my strongest reasons for removing my family from Richmond to Baltimore in 1834, was an irrepressible foreboding of the terrible scenes we are now witnessing. I stated this to my brother, J. C. Crane, and that north of the Potomac I should hope to be out of the way of them.

WM. CRANE.

Baltimore, July, 1862.

The following letter is a copy of one I addressed to a very influential friend;* but from a personal interview with him, I became satisfied that his views and impressions were so little in coincidence with my own, that I never sent it to him :

“ RICHMOND, March, 1833.

“ *My Dear Sir* :—I have written out some queries on the all-absorbing subject of our colored population, and should be glad if you can spare time to look them over and give me your opinion of them. I have thought and felt much on this subject from the time I removed from New Jersey to Richmond, twenty-one years ago, and my present views of it differ widely from almost every individual I meet with. Whether they are correct or not you may judge. They are the result of a good deal of acquaintance with colored people, both slaves and free, and of much anxious thought over it. I have always felt a deep interest in the colonization of our colored people in Africa, and I still think that this object of christian benevolence has vastly stronger claims on

* Dr. W. S. Plummer, then of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va.

our exertions and our prayers than any other of the great schemes of the day. We are thus sending the Gospel of Jesus Christ to heathen Africa; we thus most effectually destroy the slave-trade at its root; and we elevate every man we send there to an immediate equality with the rest of mankind; while we most happily remove from our own country so much of the most deadly burden under which it groans.

“But the colored people *will not go*. They seem to me more fastened to the soil, in their prejudices, than the whites themselves. The law of our State appropriating eighteen thousand dollars to send our free people to Africa, is a failure. I can't find one to accept this bounty. But suppose a mass of them were willing to go, and ample funds were supplied to send them, how could they *subsist* or *govern themselves*, in the unhealthy wilds of Liberia? I expect a few enterprising, intelligent ones may continue to go, and perhaps as fast as our colonies there may be able to accommodate them; but the immense unobstructed annual increase in our country appals me. It would seem to me a miracle of vastly greater magnitude to separate the colored people from the white in this country, and remove them all to Africa, no matter how long a time should be allowed for it, (for time only increases the evil,) than that which removed the Israelites from Egypt. Indeed I must say, frankly, that I can see no possible ultimate remedy for this evil, but for the white man, in this boasted land of liberty, to lay aside his *pride of color*, and to admit what was never denied till within the last few centuries, that ‘God has made of one blood all nations of men,’ that ‘all men are born free and equal,’ and without any regard to complexion, all naturally possess the same inalienable rights; and I cannot escape the conclusion that, however determined the white man may be never to submit to such a state of things in this country, a just God has left him no other remedy for this great evil. Having brought the colored man forcibly here to gratify his

cupidity and avarice, I can't see how he can now rid himself of the incumbrance. Inevitable destiny seems to me to have settled this question; and, viewing the matter thus, I feel deeply chagrined at the late stringent laws of our Legislature against any sort of schools for colored people, and a prohibition against all colored preaching, or even an assemblage, at any time or place, by themselves, of more than five persons, for whatever purpose, evincing thus a determination to prevent even their learning to read the Bible.

I confess my heart sickens at this, and I can't help inquiring, Has the colored man no advocate in this land of liberty? —no heroic philanthropist who has the ability and the courage to plead his cause? Will a continued (not to say fruitless) effort to keep him in ignorance, (while light is spreading all around him,) or the passage of stringent or cruel laws, remedy this growing evil? Or must it still continue, while thousands of white people, brooding anxiously and silently over it, find themselves unable to suppress their forebodings that possibly *nullification*, or some similar ground of fanatical discord, may array North and South, anti-slavery and pro-slavery, in a deadly strife, such as may break up the bonds of our Union in scenes of blood, and ultimately thus break off the shackles of the slave? May God, in infinite mercy, prevent this, and may He give us all grace and wisdom to understand our duty with regard to this momentous subject, as well as strength and prudence in doing it.

I should be glad to learn whether your impressions coincide at all with mine.

Yours, &c.,

W. C.

No QUESTION has probably been oftener reiterated among good men within the past three years than "What shall be done *with* the negro?"

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